

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An image processing method,
comprising ~~steps of:~~

obtaining input image information including input image data
from an input device;

5 discriminating plural ~~subjects~~ subject images existing in
the input image data;

dividing the input image data into plural subject ~~patterns~~
image data corresponding to the discriminated plural ~~subjects~~
subject images;

10 obtaining a relationship among the plural subject ~~patterns~~
images;

determining a processing method for the input image data of
the plural subject ~~patterns~~ images based on ~~a basis of~~ the
obtained relationship, and

15 processing the input image data of the plural subject
~~patterns~~ images in accordance with the determined processing
method so as to ~~obtain~~ produce output image data.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein as
the processing method, a respective processing method is
determined for each subject ~~pattern~~ image data based on
respective relevant information regarding each subject ~~pattern~~
5 image.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, wherein the respective relevant information regarding each subject pattern image includes priority order information set for each subject image.

4. (Current Amended) The method of claim 3, wherein the priority order information is set in accordance with a kind of each subject image.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 3, wherein the priority order information includes a weighting value set in accordance with a degree of importance of each subject image.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~ 3, wherein the dividing ~~step is conducted by a pattern~~ comprises an image extracting process to extract the plural subject ~~patterns~~ images from the input image data, and wherein the respective relevant information includes image pattern information regarding each extracted subject pattern image.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~3~~ 6, wherein the pattern image information includes sub-priority order information set for each subject pattern image in accordance with existence situation how each subject pattern image exists in an image area

5 of the input image data, and wherein the priority order information is corrected by the sub-priority order information.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7, wherein the sub-priority order information is set in accordance with at least one of an occupation ratio of each subject pattern image to the image area and a location of each subject pattern image on the
5 image area.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the plural ~~subjects existing~~ subject images in the input image data are discriminated in accordance with scene attribution of the input image data.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~ 2, wherein the input image information includes the scene attribution as additional information.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~ 2, wherein the input device inputs the scene attribution of the input image data.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~3~~ 2, wherein ~~the~~ priority order information is set in accordance with the scene attribution of the input image data.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~ 6, wherein
when each subject ~~patter~~ image comprises plural unit ~~patterns~~
images, the ~~pattern image~~ extracting process extracts the plural
unit ~~patterns~~ images and detects ~~the an~~ existence situation of
5 each subject ~~pattern image~~ from connecting conditions among the
plural unit ~~patterns~~ images.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13, wherein the
~~pattern image~~ extracting process ~~is conducted by the input device~~
~~in such a way that~~ comprises inputting on a screen on which the
input image data is indicated the location of each of the plural
5 unit images, ~~patterns is inputted on a screen on which the input~~
~~image data is indicated, and wherein the pattern extracting~~
~~process obtains~~ obtaining connecting relation information among
all of the extracted plural unit ~~patterns~~ images, ~~determines~~
determining the subject ~~pattern image~~ information from the
10 connecting relation information, and ~~extracts~~ extracting the
plural subject ~~patterns~~ images from the input image data based on
~~a basis of the subject the image~~ pattern information.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the
obtaining ~~step selects of the input image information comprises~~
selecting a set of input image data from plural sets of input
image data, wherein the ~~pattern image~~ extracting process obtains
5 the subject ~~pattern image~~ information including the connecting

relation information from the selected set of input image data,
and the processing step conducts the wherein image processing is
conducted for the other sets of input image data by applying the
subject image pattern information to the other sets of input
10 image data.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13, wherein the
~~pattern~~ image extracting process extracts the plural subject
~~pattern~~ images in relation to customer information.

17. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus,
comprising:

a first obtaining section for obtaining input image
information including input image data from an input device;

5 a discriminating section for discriminating plural ~~subjects~~
subject images existing in the input image data;

a dividing section for dividing the input image data into
plural subject ~~patterns~~ image data corresponding to the
discriminated plural ~~subjects~~ subject images;

10 a second obtaining section for obtaining a relationship
among the plural subject ~~patterns~~ images;

a determining section for determining a processing method
for the input image data of the plural subject ~~patterns~~ images
based on ~~a basis of~~ the obtained relationship, and

15 a processing section for processing the input image data of
the plural subject ~~patterns~~ images in accordance with the
determined processing method so as to ~~obtain~~ produce output image
data.

18. (Currently Amended) A computer readable storage medium
having stored thereon a computer program for controlling a
computer to conduct ~~conducting~~ an image processing method [[,]]
comprising ~~steps of~~:

5 obtaining input image information including input image data
from an input device;

discriminating plural ~~subjects~~ subject images existing in
the input image data;

10 dividing the input image data into plural subject ~~patterns~~
image data corresponding to the discriminated plural ~~subjects~~
subject images;

obtaining a relationship among the plural subject ~~patterns~~
images;

15 determining a processing method for the input image data of
the plural subject ~~patterns~~ images based on ~~a basis of~~ the
obtained relationship, and

processing the input image data of the plural subject
~~patterns~~ images in accordance with the determined processing
method so as to ~~obtain~~ produce output image data.